# CHAPTER 6

## The Company "Sto"

Legend has it that Cap Gates selected the site of the city of Crossett where he did because his horse was tired. As the story goes, Gates had left Hamburg in disgust because the people of the rail center would not sell him a location for his new mill. Moreover, they had expressed some trepidation about the kind of people he might bring in and they let him know clearly that they did not want their little city contaminated. It is a fact that Cap Gates swore then that he would build his own town and hire the kind of people he wished.

He left the boarding house in Hamburg one morning and rode south through the woods, onto the Marie Saline Road and then south through the woods again. All about him were the tallest, most magnificent pine trees he had ever seen and great oaks filled the small creek valleys here and there. The small hills were also peopled by the huge pines that seemed to reach beyond heaven. In the prairies were mounds of some sort that had been there seemingly forever and they, too, were filled with the stately pine and oak as well as sweet sassafras and mulberry. Small creeks and spring branches ran between the hills and at the foot of the small mounds, small animals and beautiful birds scampered out of his way as he sometimes rode through the forest oblivious of paths, roads or trails. He was not in a good mood this morning for he had nowhere to build his sawmill and the town that would grow up around it.

He hit the dim path used sometimes by farmers' wagons from east to west and turned east along this poorly defined road toward the home of his new friend, Judge Lochala, whom he had met on previous wanderings to buy timber. The judge had already helped him in securing deeds to small tracts of land here and there over the county, especially near the Marie Saline Road and south toward White on the border of Arkansas and Louisiana.

The legend continues as he pulled his horse, Nig, up at the judge's gate amidst the howling of half a dozen hunting dogs and presently the judge appeared on the front porch of the double-pen house.

Judge Lochala said, "Cap, come on in for a cup of coffee. Just kick the dogs out of the way."

Cap replied, throwing a leg over the saddle, "I could shore stand a cup of that Cajun brew."

Mrs. Lochala fussed around the room awhile and then excused herself to see about some of the children. The two young men sat and talked about the weather, the crops and the marauding wolves for a while until the judge thought it time for business, if there was any, to be considered.

The judge asked matter of factly, "What land do you want this time?"

"Do I always have to want someone's land?" Cap inquired, a little testily.

"No, but you almost always do want someone's land when you drop by to see me. Anyway, what's up, Cap?"

"I've got to build a town." Cap replied, rolling the last of his black coffee around in his cup.

"Build you a town! And why on earth do you need a town all of your own? What in the damned tarnation is wrong with Hamburg?"

Won't let me build in the great metropolis," the visitor said.

"Why in tarnation, I'd like to know?"

"Afraid it will corrupt their upstanding, God-fearing citizens," Cap replied, rising and turning toward the hall door.

"Well, I'll be damned!" the judge roared, following the younger man out into the hall.

"Wanta go with me to find my town?" Cap asked, rolling his hat around in his hand.



"Wait while I saddle up."

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"Okay, we'll stop there then."

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"Wait while I saddle up."

The two friends were soon on the trail riding in search of a place to build a town. They went east to West Creek and rode down it for about three miles and hit a dim trail, barely wide enough for the two riders to travel abreast. Then they turned west through some of the most magnificent pine timber either man had ever seen. They came to a wide prairie, called by natives Frost Prairie. It was barren except here and there on one of the mounds grew sassafras or sweet gum, sometimes blackberry briars or persimmons. They rode through Frost Prairie and then into another great forest of beautiful pine. They crossed Snake Creek and then a small brooklet where the middle of Crossett is now but was then occupied only by hickory, oak, sweet gum and pine along its banks.

Cap said, "Old Nig is about tuckered out."

The judge replied, "Horace is too. Right up here is one of the best resting places hereabouts and the best deer stand in the whole dadgummed county."

"Okay, we'll stop there then."

They stopped and sat down under a towering pine surrounded by spreading red oak, the horses being given the rein so they could graze freely as the men rested and talked. They had not brought lunch for neither knew how long they would be away from home. So, they just talked, first of the attitude of the citizens of Hamburg, then of the magnificence of the forests about them, of the politics of the day and related topics. Conversation slowed to a halt.

Finally the judge said, "Build your town right here."

Cap replied, testily, "What the hell is here?"

"Nothing," said the judge, adding, "and that is the big attraction."

"What attraction?"

"Have a town like you want it, the kind of mill you want, the kind of stores you want, even the kind of people you want."

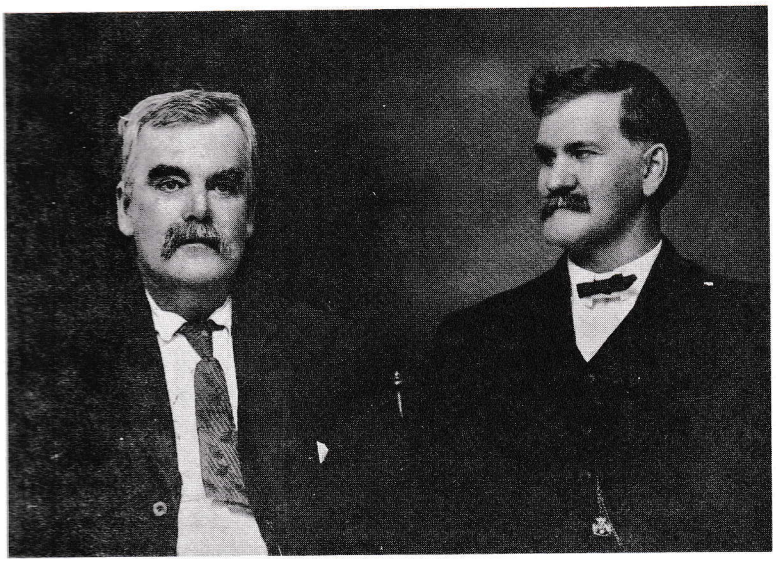
The young sawmiller was silent a long time. He broke a twig and picked his teeth, he scratched in the sand at their feet with a hickory switch. He spat far out to the left and then stood up and looked around. He said nothing but the judge was waiting, feeling in his heart that he had sown a seed that might grow. Cap Gates kicked a pine burr far out toward the west and it rolled to a stop beside a slender, almost branchless pine.

"That will be the company store," Cap said and his friend jumped to his feet and grabbed his right hand and shook it violently.

"Sure as shooting, we've done it today. Cap, are you sure this is the place, without a doubt?"

"This is the place and this will be the town and the mill and the store and everything. This will be my town and my store."

And so it was. The focal point of the town Cap Gates built was the company store built on ground cleared of huge pines, beautiful oak, scrawny blackgum, white sycamore and bushes of the forest. Until the town was fifty years old, almost everything aside from the direct production and sale of manufactured products was handled through the company store built on the northeast corner of lot 100 at the head of Main Street, opposite the place where the two men considered the matter that summer day in 1899.



*Judge Jim Lochala and Cap Gates in a picture made by McGee's Studio, Hamburg, Arkansas about 1915. The two men became friends as soon as Gates came to Ashley County and remained close through the years. Judge Lochala's Grandson, Ira, said the Gates home was on land homesteaded by his family, and Ira's father, Walter, had a deer camp located about where the second block of Cedar Street is now. (Sullins Library Collection)*



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For fifty years the company store or its successor, also on the same lot and the same size, served the people of Crossett with distinction. It was widely acclaimed as the best store in the entire southeast Arkansas area. It handled everything people could want or need for their homes, their farms, or fledgling industries. Being fifty miles from Monroe, Louisiana, forty miles from El Dorado, Arkansas and without a road to it, eighty miles from Pine Bluff and forty miles from Warren, this mercantile establishment filled a gaping need in the area and did everything within its power to meet those needs. From all testimony this store handled the best clothing, furniture, groceries, hardware, feed and fertilizer, gents' furnishings, candy and even now and then furnished caskets in time of need. Besides all this, anyone in the entire area had credit from year to year and was never sent a bill. If he found himself unable to pay his bill at the end of the year, he simply told the manager and was given another year to catch up, and he usually did.

Interviews with many of the citizens of Crossett, people who have known the city, the company, and the area for many years have given us a clear idea of the type institution the old Crossett commissary really was.

Hazen Bryant, who came to Crossett in 1922, and for many years managed the power plant, gives a rather complete testimony of the store. He said:

> It was a good general store, one that any mill town could be proud of. The company commissary had departments such as the drug department, a huge grocery department, handling the best and freshest of groceries, a hardware department that handled whatever a householder in a small town might need, cross-cut saws, plow points, plow stocks, harrows, harnesses, even wagons at one time or another. The dry goods department was one of the most noteworthy for it handled all kinds of piece goods, huge bolts of cloth for all kinds of dressmaking and other household needs. Later this department handled ladies ready-to-wear of the finest brands. The shoe department handled the best brands of shoes for dress as well as work and it was sometimes in connection with the gents' furnishing department. When farmers took Cap Gates seriously and began trying to make the dirt

farms really pay off, feed and fertilizer became a big department and these commodities were handled by the boxcar load through the feed department in the back of the huge building. It was here, too, that the coffins were kept in those days.[1]

A few names were mentioned by Bryant. A Mr. Pine managed the grocery, feed and fertilizer department. Jim Wilcoxon handled hardware and furniture, Luther Moffatt handled shoes and gents' furnishings. He remembers three general managers, a Mr. Lemons, A. T. Sparks, and Mr. Van Aernam.

Bryant added:

> All merchandise came by rail then, simply because there were no good roads in any direction and the use of the huge truck was not yet common. There was no Highway 82 as there is now and no bridge over the Ouachita River. The highway east toward Hamburg was ungraveled most of the time and a mere wagon trail. There was no highway north toward Warren and Warren was not too promising as a trade center. No highway led south to Monroe, Louisiana and Bastrop was little ahead of Crossett as a shopping center. Hamburg had several stores but nothing to compare with the big store in Crossett.
>
> Everything in the entire store was strictly guaranteed to be satisfactory and prices were always in line with similar goods in far away places. They handled everything from plow points to aeroplanes.
>
> Men made $1.30 a day ordinarily. A saw filer, one of the highest paid workers, received $7.50 per day and later the average pay was between $3.50 and $4.00 daily. During the depression, pay slipped to 90¢ per day. My first job paid $1.35 per day. However, during the depression, the store carried people until they were able to get work again so that no family actually suffered physical need. When they found work again, they nearly always paid the store promptly.
>
> There must have been a water toilet, but I cannot remember where.[2]

The store operated its own ice-house, about fifty feet south of the store. They also had a bottling plant which made a good soft drink called Gayola. Working



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Bull Durham, Star Navy, Brown's Mule, P
Oak, Piper Hedick, Tinsley's Natural Lea
Garrett snuff, pipes and picnic twist and

at the bottling plant was the first job Cliff Ray ever had. Though everyone had a cow or two, later a Mr. Woods ran a dairy northwest of town.

Parking was no problem. In the beginning, everyone hitched his team in the back of the store where there was a watering trough. Later automobiles were parked at will in front of the store on a rough, dirt street.

Bryant remembers the first, and maybe only shoot-out in Crossett in the early days. A Mr. Shipley and a Mr. Vivian shot each other to death in the south door of the front of the building Bryant said:

> The shooting was at the southeast door of the commissary. Mr. Shipley fell in the door and as his foe stepped over him, he shot Mr. Vivian five times. Both died of their wounds.
>
> In those days, no bell system was used for anything in the store and some people would stay as late as the managers would allow. So a 'Rap Out' system was devised whereby the manager would simply rap his knuckles on something until everyone heard and evacuated. Usually closing time was about 7:30.
>
> As were all the houses in the city, the big store was painted a Crossett gray color, exactly like all the other buildings in town. The huge commissary had a shingle roof and was flat and a wide porch ran the length of the building. Paned glass windows covered the entire front except where the doors were.[3]

For many years the telephone exchange was upstairs near the southeast corner of the store, and beyond the exchange was a meeting room where Woodmen of the World and other groups met.

In the middle of the store between the windows was the confectionery counter where all kinds of candy were sold. Karcher candy was stored in buckets. Common candies of the day were handled such as peppermint sticks, gum drops, suckers, and jawbreakers. Next to the candy counter was the tobacco area where many kinds of tobacco were sold such as Bull Durham, Star Navy, Brown's Mule, Prince Albert, Twin Oak, Piper Hedick, Tinsley's Natural Leaf, cigarette papers, Garrett snuff, pipes and picnic twist and cotton boll.[4]

*A front view of the Crossett Mercantile store in 1916, which could be a typical Saturday crowd visiting on the long porch. The building was enlarged after the original construction. The Masonic Lodge Hall was over the store until the first brick building was erected in 1913. Later the front was remodeled with a large sign over the porch. In 1938 a new brick building replaced the old wooden structure. Note the absence of automobiles in front, but there are a horse and rider and a bicycle.* (Forest Echoes *Files)*

M. P. Ingram of 1002 Beech Street in Crossett was reared eight miles east of Crossett but his family always traded at the commissary or at the Crossett Camp Store on Chemanihaupt Creek. He is now 70 and retired but worked all his life for the Crossett industries. He recalled the store clearly:

> The commissary served the whole area for many miles about. It was the Saturday meeting place for the county. One could go to the old commissary and meet almost everyone, for everyone in the county had credit at the store. Dry goods, hardware and groceries were the best that could be obtained anywhere. All merchandise followed this pattern of excellence. A customer could pay all his bill monthly or yearly or just part of his bill and the store would carry him over. The commissary sold fresh meat bought locally. Mr. Roy Berry was head of the meat department.
>
> Farmers, loggers, swampers and many others bought all tools and other hardware at the commissary. Feed and fertilizer came to the store in box-



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the back of the main store.

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The work train left the vicinity of th
each morning. Daddy Rich ran an app
three big apples could be bought for a
five cents would buy all the bananas
Mr. Rich bought his fruit by the car lo
nuts in season.[5]

Mrs. Jimmie Lawson Boyd was born ir
of one of Crossett's finest mayors. She has
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Mrs. Boyd said:

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car loads and were stored in the huge warehouse at the back of the main store.

There was a big candy counter and the candy came loose, mostly. Cheese came in huge hoops while crackers and pickles came in barrels. You could get anything in the store that you could get anywhere else. Ice and groceries were delivered in town daily. There were many clerks, more in the grocery department than anywhere else. Men's clothing was sold and the store handled the very best lines. Railroad King was the name of the overalls handled. Mr. Rainwater and Mr. Ragland worked in the shoe department.

Horses were usually hitched in the back to a hitching rail near the watering trough, while automobiles were often parked in front in the wide, dirt street. There was a 'Frost Free' toilet in the back which was cleaned by a man driving a wagon called the 'Ice Cream Wagon.' Later, perhaps toilets were moved to the inside of the store.

The store had a ten-millimeter gun for shooting rats. The mayor of the city has the gun now. The store handled ice and the ice wagon ran daily. People used an ice book and the ice man simply provided the amount of ice indicated by the book on the front door. The work train left the vicinity of the store at 5:30 each morning. Daddy Rich ran an apple house where three big apples could be bought for a nickel. Twenty-five cents would buy all the bananas one could carry. Mr. Rich bought his fruit by the car load. He also sold nuts in season.[5]

Mrs. Jimmie Lawson Boyd was born in 1918, the daughter of one of Crossett's finest mayors. She has lived in Crossett all her life and was well acquainted with the commissary or big store.

Mrs. Boyd said:

There was not anything like the commissary, nothing ever. It was the largest commissary I have ever seen and we all loved it. It was the place to go for all citizens of Crossett. The accounting department was in the front part of the store and Mr. A. T. Sparks was store manager. On the right hand, next to the sawmill, was the grocery and feed department, along with many other things like plow tools. On the left hand were ladies' furnishings with huge bolts of all

kinds of fine cloth for dressmaking. Also on the left was the shoe department.

Mrs. Clara Berry sold piece goods and other ladies' furnishing. Robert Rainwater and Robert Ragland sold shoes for many years in the left back of the store. John Lee Woods ran a news stand between the drug store and the big store in a frame building where he also sold popcorn and peanuts. He rode a bicycle. The millinery department was in the far back of the store.

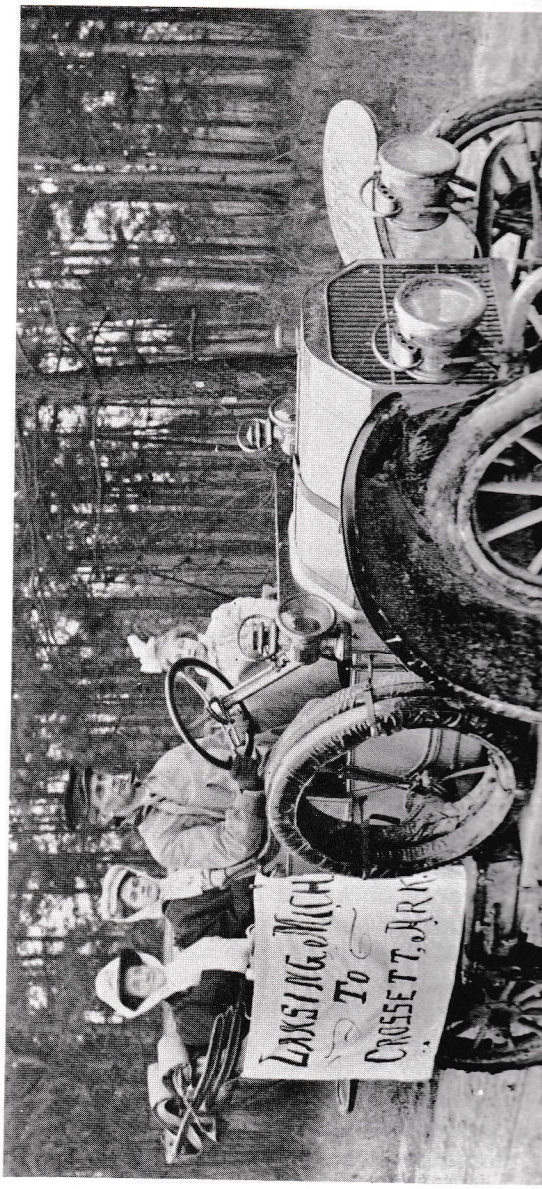
People paid their accounts then with coupons issued to employees at the mills and before that they paid with a metal coin called a Bronzie, made of brass or copper. The hardware department was in the back of the store where they also sold farm equipment. There was some furniture sold in the balcony.

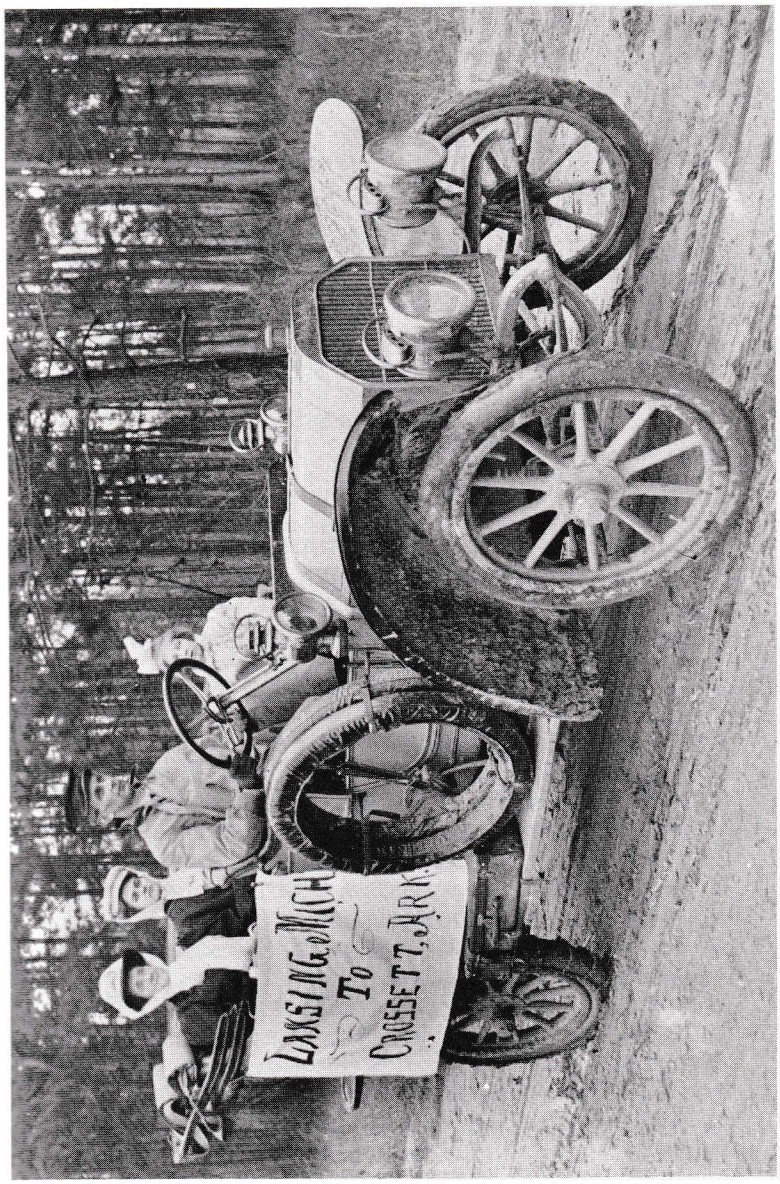
The commissary was a frame building with a porch all along the front, next to the street. The porch had wide steps on each end. One walked along the porch to the first or second door in front and entered. The big day at the store was any day one could go to town but the biggest day of all was Saturday when everyone for miles around came to town to see everyone else.

The big store always delivered groceries and other household necessities, daily. However, other stores near the town also delivered, such as the Woods Store in North Crossett and the Haygood Store in West Crossett. This institution never cut people off from credit because of unpaid bills. How they did I don't know but they seemed able to carry everyone as long as necessary and many people took advantage of this custom.[6]

*(Photo opposite page) Among the first automobiles seen in the Crossett area was the one above, presumably driven from Lansing, Michigan, to Crossett, Arkansas by C. H. Lemon, the first manager of the company store. Pictured with Mr. Lemon are (left rear) Miss Mays, who became a milliner in the Mercantile and Miss Cynthia Pearson who was a school teacher and later worked in the Mercantile. The little girl is Lemon's daughter. Note the right-hand drive on the automobile and the two sets of lights. The lights in front burned carbide and those near the driver used kerosene. There were no treads on the front tires. (Courtesy of Fannie Lou Tatum and* Forest Echoes *Files)*






LOGGING CAMP
TO
CROSSETT, ARK.

Mrs. Juanita Buckner, now 58, came to Crossett when she was about seven years old. Her father worked in the shoe department all his working life in Crossett. Mrs. Buckner is now head librarian for the Paul Sullins Library. Her testimony is enlightening:

> The store was a paradise where every need of a family was fulfilled. Father was manager of the shoe department and my visits to the store were frequent. There was a candy counter in the center of the building downstairs and it handled all kinds of delicious candy, chocolate covered cherries, two for a penny. One could take a nickel and get a sack full of candy. Children would go to the store at noon and buy candy, so there must not have been a closed campus then. There were chocolate kisses, coconut bars, peppermint sticks, both penny and nickel sticks, orange slices and licorice sticks. Candy was often sold by the piece to the children and they often just charged it to parents.

Their grocery bill would sometimes be as high as twenty-five or thirty dollars per month and her father would quarrel with her mother about the big grocery bill. Mr. Rainwater, her father, made $90 to $100 per month clerking in the store. When her mother wanted some goods, she just called the store and it was promptly delivered. Mrs. Buckner's father always walked, as did almost everyone else, to work each morning.

> On the dry goods side were Mrs. Berry, Rolf Morrison, Mrs. Jimmy Singletary, with Mr. Laron Barnette as manager. Upstairs was all kinds of material for dress making and it was displayed in show cases. All clerks were polite and accommodating, among whom were Luther Moffatt, Robert Ragland, Doc Harbison, Trot Miller, and O. S. Robinson, both from Mississippi.
>
> Caskets were kept in the back, probably along with the hardware and feed and we and other children used to play among the caskets, sometimes crawling into them for the fear and the fun of it. An eye doctor came periodically and examined eyes for patrons of the store. The clerks used huge balls of string and large rolls of paper and they could tear the paper in the exact sizes necessary for a package. Alex Mosley was head of the furniture department, and



groceries and meat were sold in the back. In was a warehouse that held just everything r the store and its patrons.

Mr. Marks was a pharmacist who work drug store in what is now the Masonic Build Lovett and Grady Binns jerked soda in the d too. I remember my first trip to town from on East Third Street, only three blocks aw supposed to go to the Methodist Church an and then walk on to the store. I, however, got by a large house on the corner of Pine and walked up Pine for a few doors and someone was lost and then told me the way to the st terribly embarrassed.

One entered the great store from a fr and onto the porch by wide steps on each building was still frame when we came to remember that Old Adrian came each day ered ice for the ice box. Soon after we came Woods began to deliver milk from his dair Crossett. John Harville delivered fresh mea wagon. Mr. Parkhill used to deliver vegetal Mrs. McDougald also delivered all kinds vegetables, all picked the day before.[7]

Mrs. Robert Rainwater came to Crossett in husband and two small daughters. She is nov remembers much of the town and its early da mother of Juanita Buckner, librarian and Mrs. botham, of Hamburg.

> The store was a good place to trade. Pr very reasonable and people paid with Bronz and then with coupons. Everyone had cre commissary, payment being simply held o pay. Mr. Rainwater was paid seventy-five dollars per month and rent was about twen per month. My husband worked in the sh ment and the store was just beginning ladies' ready-to-wear in 1932. E. K. Van Ae manager at the time. Some of the clerks we Moffatt, a Mr. Barnette, Mr. and Mrs. Ed B Tatum, Matt Sheppherd, Mrs. Singletar Ragland, Tom Cruthirds, R. L. Brooks, J. U and a man they called Big Martin.[8]

groceries and meat were sold in the back. In the back was a warehouse that held just everything needed by the store and its patrons.

Mr. Marks was a pharmacist who worked in the drug store in what is now the Masonic Building. Noel Lovett and Grady Binns jerked soda in the drug store too. I remember my first trip to town from our house on East Third Street, only three blocks away. I was supposed to go to the Methodist Church and turn up and then walk on to the store. I, however, got confused by a large house on the corner of Pine and Third. I walked up Pine for a few doors and someone told me I was lost and then told me the way to the store. I was terribly embarrassed.

One entered the great store from a front porch and onto the porch by wide steps on each end. The building was still frame when we came to the city. I remember that Old Adrian came each day and delivered ice for the ice box. Soon after we came Mr. Billy Woods began to deliver milk from his dairy in West Crossett. John Harville delivered fresh meat from his wagon. Mr. Parkhill used to deliver vegetables and a Mrs. McDougald also delivered all kinds of garden vegetables, all picked the day before.[7]

Mrs. Robert Rainwater came to Crossett in 1932 with her husband and two small daughters. She is now over 80 and remembers much of the town and its early days. She is the mother of Juanita Buckner, librarian and Mrs. W. T. Higginbotham, of Hamburg.

The store was a good place to trade. Prices were very reasonable and people paid with Bronzies at first and then with coupons. Everyone had credit at the commissary, payment being simply held out of their pay. Mr. Rainwater was paid seventy-five or eighty dollars per month and rent was about twenty dollars per month. My husband worked in the shoe department and the store was just beginning to handle ladies' ready-to-wear in 1932. E. K. Van Aernam was manager at the time. Some of the clerks were Luther Moffatt, a Mr. Barnette, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Berry, C. F. Tatum, Matt Sheppherd, Mrs. Singletary, Robert Ragland, Tom Cruthirds, R. L. Brooks, J. U. Walker, and a man they called Big Martin.[8]

*(Photo opposite page) The Crossett Mercantil the brick Masonic building in 1936. (l.-r.): E Bruen Woods, Curtis Joe Dolan, O. S. Robi W. R. Marks, pharmacist, C. J. Boardman, and Leon Binns, who happened by when the In the lower right foreground is the sign deno forerunner of the modern drive-in. Customer the building and order an ice cream cone or a c of Grady Binns)*

Buck Carter of West Crossett is a reti father ran the gin in Crossett for many y his entire life near Crossett and graduate school. The big store was the trade cen many years and he remembers much ab the goods handled and the people who r

The old building which so man was the same size as the present bu entirely of lumber of the best kind. was approximately 180 by 150 feet w back of 60 by 60 feet. The ceiling w there was a mezzanine floor on the n was the furniture. The ladies' ready the south side upstairs and run by Sparks had his office between the right in the middle of the store. On th men's department run by Mr. Luth the shoe department was run by Rob Mr. Tillar became manager in the 1930 and his office was upstairs. The an office next to Mr. Tillar.

I went to the manager's office beginning of the harvest to see abou for the year and I had no security. Th so I had no money and I had obligati So I asked for credit until one year af Tillar handed me a piee of paper and there. I bought all the clothes we ne pay anything on the bill for over a y monthly bills and paid no interest. I ticket.

Off the warehouse on the south s platform from which the farmers l

*(Photo opposite page) The Crossett Mercantile Drug Store located in the brick Masonic building in 1936. (l.-r.): Employees Grady Binns, Bruen Woods, Curtis Joe Dolan, O. S. Robinson, Velma Boyd Hays, W. R. Marks, pharmacist, C. J. Boardman, manager of the Rose Inn, and Leon Binns, who happened by when the picture was being made. In the lower right foreground is the sign denoting "Curb Service," the forerunner of the modern drive-in. Customers could park in front of the building and order an ice cream cone or a coca cola for 5¢. (Courtesy of Grady Binns)*

Buck Carter of West Crossett is a retired contractor whose father ran the gin in Crossett for many years. Carter has spent his entire life near Crossett and graduated from the local high school. The big store was the trade center for the family for many years and he remembers much about the big building, the goods handled and the people who ran it.

> The old building which so many have forgotten was the same size as the present building but made entirely of lumber of the best kind. The old building was approximately 180 by 150 feet with storage on the back of 60 by 60 feet. The ceiling was very high and there was a mezzanine floor on the north side of which was the furniture. The ladies' ready-to-wear was on the south side upstairs and run by Mrs. Berry. Mr. Sparks had his office between the big front doors, right in the middle of the store. On the south side was a men's department run by Mr. Luther Moffatt while the shoe department was run by Robert Rainwater. A Mr. Tillar became manager in the years 1929 and 1930 and his office was upstairs. The cashier also had an office next to Mr. Tillar.
>
> I went to the manager's office one year at the beginning of the harvest to see about buying clothes for the year and I had no security. The crop was not in, so I had no money and I had obligations for that year. So I asked for credit until one year after that date. Mr. Tillar handed me a piee of paper and asked me to sign there. I bought all the clothes we needed and did not pay anything on the bill for over a year. I received no monthly bills and paid no interest. I merely signed a ticket.
>
> Off the warehouse on the south side was a loading platform from which the farmers loaded their feed,

groceries, furniture and fertilizer. At first the bathrooms were outside but later were moved inside in the warehouse. The first cesspool in Crossett was where the swimming pool is now and built by Mr. Henry Stephens with mules and slip. This must have been in the early twenties. Mr. Stephens was a contractor and a logger, a man of ability. There was a hitching rail on the south side of the warehouse near a long watering trough.

On rainy days, farmers came to town to swap lies on the front porch of the big store. Between posts on the porch were two-by-twelve seats just high enough to be comfortable and here the men sat and told their lies and stories. The porch and the entire ceiling and roof of the store were supported by 12" x 12" pine posts. The store was ceiled with the very best heart pine lumber sometimes called beaded ceiling. The floor was also of pine and high off the ground. The roof was a flat built-up roof.

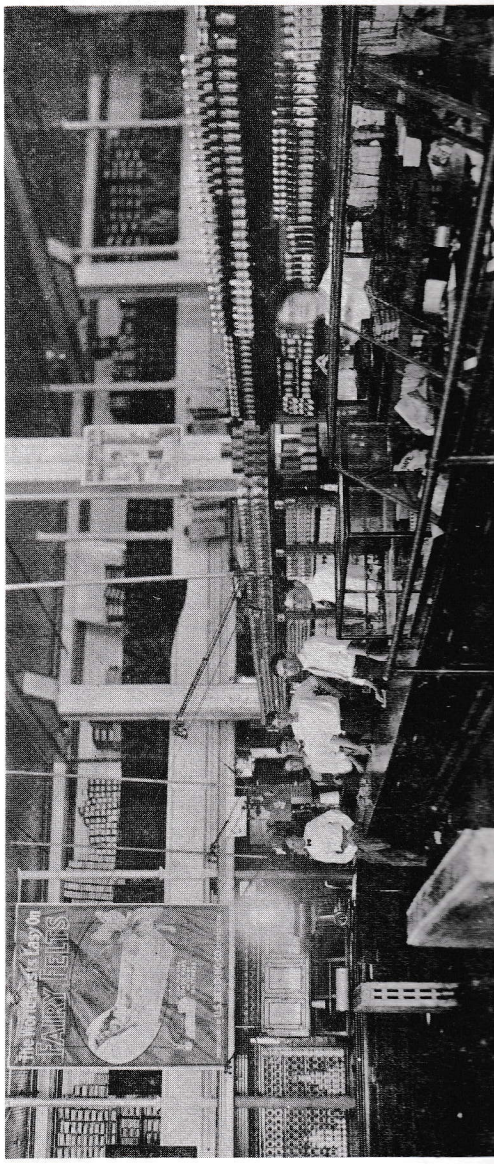
On the south side of the front of the store on the outside was a stairway which led to the telephone exchange and a meeting room. High school students would meet there to plan things and the Woodmen of the World also regularly met in this room. The Masonic lodge must have been organized here and held its first meetings here also. I am not certain that this is true but it seems most probable.

Bronzies, metal disks, were used at first by the store and later coupons which were also discontinued about 1936. There was no Highway 82 then running beside the store and no paved Main Street. A railroad ran to Main Street on the north side with a wide loading platform. The road ran west a short distance and then wound around the mill to the gin and then north to the Whetstone Store. The Whetstone store was an excellent institution and located about where Cantley's Store is today.[9]

Mr. Frank Hancock is in his eighties and has lived near Crossett all his life. He now lives in one of the oldest houses in the area. His memory is excellent and he said:

"The big store handled everything and anyone who was anyone could get plenty of credit. The store never handled anything but the very best materials. It was the only store we had. I suppose there never was a better store anywhere."[10]





*The grocery department in the company store. In the right foreground is Emma Cooper, and next to her in the center of the picture is Ed Berry. The others are not identified. Notice the modern steam radiators. Groceries were kept behind the counters and the clerks filled the orders. The large poster in the background proclaims "The World Rests Easy On Fairy Felts," a mattress made by U. S. Bedding Company. Note the system of pulleys with money cups used to make change and send tickets to the upstairs office. No cash registers were downstairs. (Courtesy of Dorothy Cook)*

*(Photo opposite page) This group is the cast o*
*in 1910 to packed houses in Crossett, Lake*
*Wilmot to raise money for the Methodist Chu*
*to indicate they are on their way to an out-of*
*the location seems to be the porch of the Crossett*
*Two separate issues of* Forest Echoes *identif*
*so both names are given. Seated, front row: Mr*
*Frank Cannon, Frank Cannon, Kate Seame*
*Glass, Charlie Finch, and Clarence Smith.*
*Trieschmann. Back row, seated: Byron A. Ca*
*Gates or a Miss Jordan, Clem Baker, and I*
Echoes *Files)*

John Henry Allen is 75 and has h
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missary in the time office. Allen said of

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> There was no store around here t
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> shoes and no shoddy merchandise w
>
> Some of the men clerks were Lu
> T. Sparks, Laron Barnette, Georg
> Hodge, Alec Mosley, Haywood San
> Tatum. Also E. K. Van Aernam, Ro
> Hart, Dewey Cooper, Leo Scriber
> Some of the women workers were
> Nanny Meeks, Julia Pierce, Mary
> Laiche, Thelma Boyd, and Del Garc
> working in the store at some time we
> water, Bill Jenkins, J. U. Walker, T.
> Ragland, and Dan Burgess. Hours for
> workers and the customers were se
> days every week.

*(Photo opposite page) This group is the cast of a play that performed in 1910 to packed houses in Crossett, Lake Village, Portland, and Wilmot to raise money for the Methodist Church. The suitcases seem to indicate they are on their way to an out-of-town performance, and the location seems to be the porch of the Crossett Company Commissary. Two separate issues of* Forest Echoes *identify two people differently, so both names are given. Seated, front row: Mrs. Cynthia Woods, Mrs. Frank Cannon, Frank Cannon, Kate Seamons, Dr. Smith or D. S. Glass, Charlie Finch, and Clarence Smith. Standing: Mrs. Adam Trieschmann. Back row, seated: Byron A. Cannon, Mrs. E. W. (Rose) Gates or a Miss Jordan, Clem Baker, and L. M. Hawkins. (*Forest Echoes *Files)*

John Henry Allen is 75 and has held some of the most important positions in both the Crossett Company and Georgia Pacific. He began his career at the last Crossett lumber camp and moved with it to Crossett where he began work in the commissary in the time office. Allen said of the commissary:

> I came here in 1929 and the Highway 82 was built through town in 1928 and 1929. When I first came, they used the coupon book for the employees so that they could have credit. Wages were cut but the company took care of her employees. This store handled only the very best brands of merchandise and salesmen for the better companies knew Crossett was a good place to get a large order or none at all.
>
> There was no store around here for many miles to compare with the commissary. It was an excellent store. Then they handled Curlee suits and Florsheim shoes and no shoddy merchandise was ever sold.
>
> Some of the men clerks were Luther Moffatt, A. T. Sparks, Laron Barnette, George Ethridge, Joe Hodge, Alec Mosley, Haywood Sanderlin and C. F. Tatum. Also E. K. Van Aernam, Roy Berry, Leland Hart, Dewey Cooper, Leo Scriber and a Mr. Boyd. Some of the women workers were Mrs. Ed Berry, Nanny Meeks, Julia Pierce, Mary Scriber, Lucille Laiche, Thelma Boyd, and Del Gardner. Other men working in the store at some time were Robert Rainwater, Bill Jenkins, J. U. Walker, T. J. Locke, Robert Ragland, and Dan Burgess. Hours for business for the workers and the customers were seven to seven, six days every week.

Groceries were delivered every day, at first with horse and wagon and later in trucks. They would deliver anything from five cents on up. Sometimes it was ten or eleven o'clock at night before deliveries were finished.

The Crossett commissary never had a sale such as now and no special days.

The company was even then planning to get out of everything but the manufacturing business. They were actually closing out the one-man town everyone had grown used to over the years. Labor unions probably had something to do with the decision [to close the commissary] but I am not certain.[11]

And so it was that the one-man town died rather quickly, and the one-man store died even earlier but the one-man town and the great commissary that treated everyone alike and never denied credit went the way of modernism and the new way of life. Many stores now do the same thing the big store had done earlier. More people make money from the mercantile business but no one does a better job than the old company store that had brought up a generation.

### Notes on Chapter Six

[1] Interview with Hazen Bryant, Crossett citizen.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Interview with Buck Carter, Crossett contractor.
[4] Interview with Mrs. J. W. Buckner, Crossett librarian.
[5] Interview with M. P. Ingram, Crossett resident.
[6] Interview with Mrs. Jimmie Lawson Boyd, Crossett resident.
[7] Interview with Mrs. J. W. Buckner.
[8] Interview with Mrs. R. J. Rainwater, Crossett resident.
[9] Interview with Mr. Buck Carter.
[10] Interview with Frank Hancock, Crossett resident.
[11] Interview with John Henry Allen, Crossett resident.



# CHAPTER

## Play Ball

Baseball enthusiasts in Crossett w
new Millers team into a league of some k
organized early in 1937. Officials of the
$3,000,000, announced that the officials
League had voted the new team a franch
board of directors held in Monroe, Loui
1937. Other teams having franchises in
Hodge, and Swartz, Louisiana; and Bro
roe, Louisiana. Camden, Arkansas and
were reported to be interested in joinin
League, which was a minor league o
Valley area.[1]

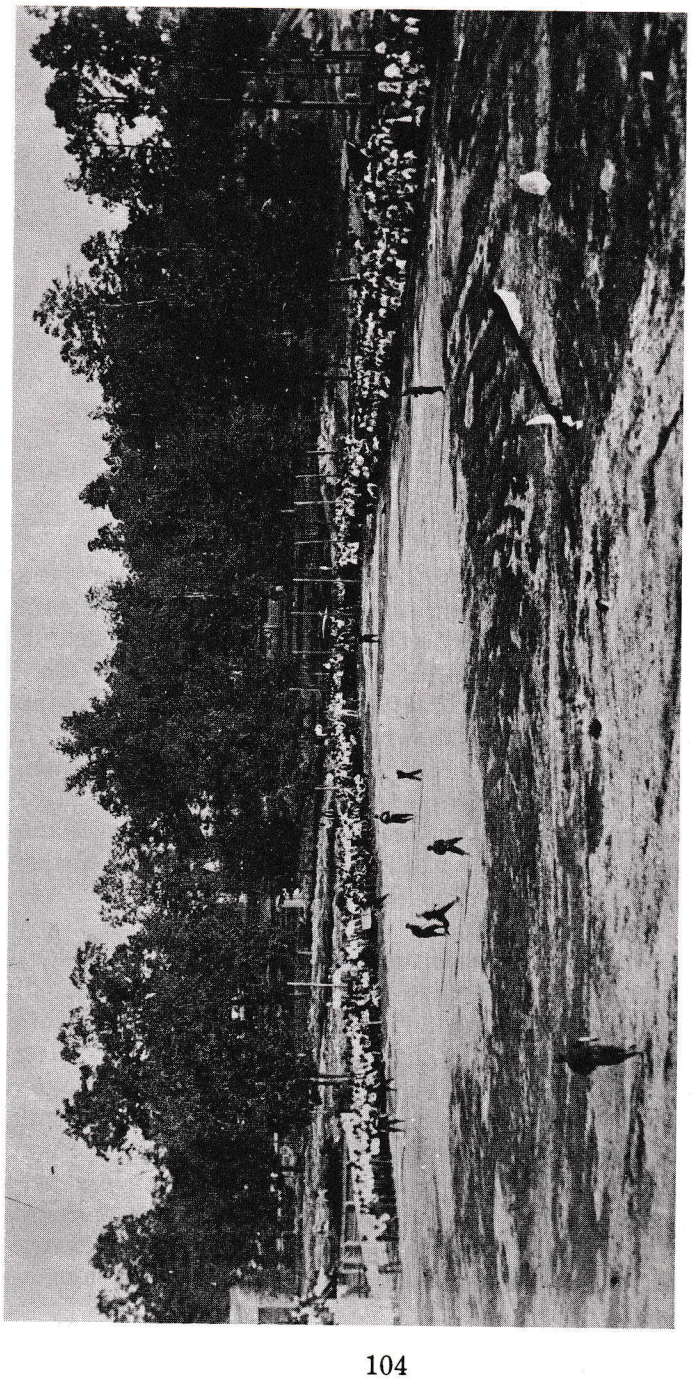
Later in the year area newspaper
*Observer*, reported the progress of the
team. On August 9 Crossett defeated Ba
of this team included Lefty Butler an
base; Shorty Oslin, second base; Paul
Cortez (Tex) Moore, catcher; Rick Co
Davis, left field, Jerry Fryer, right f
Roland Laiche and Bo Sherman, center
stop; McClain, left field; and Rob Ro
White, pitcher. By the end of 1937, the
well launched on a career in the league
sors for many years.

# CHAPTER 7

## Play Ball

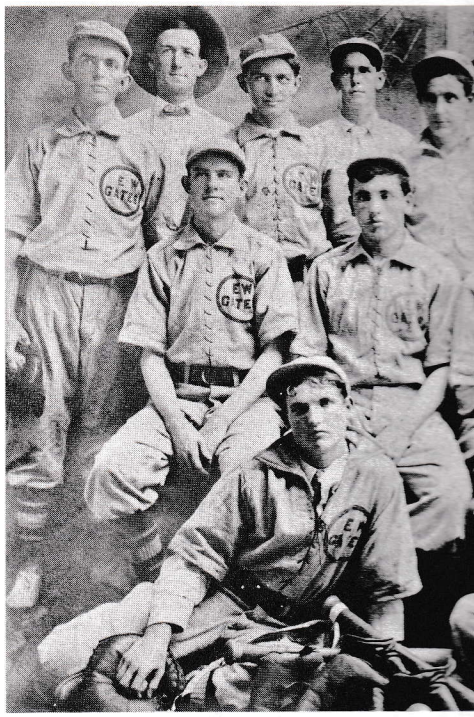
Baseball enthusiasts in Crossett were anxious to get the new Millers team into a league of some kind soon after the team organized early in 1937. Officials of the new papermill, costing $3,000,000, announced that the officials of the Ouachita Valley League had voted the new team a franchise in a meeting of the board of directors held in Monroe, Louisiana, on February 27, 1937. Other teams having franchises in the area were Ruston, Hodge, and Swartz, Louisiana; and Brown Papermill in Monroe, Louisiana. Camden, Arkansas and Sterlington, Louisiana were reported to be interested in joining the Ouachita Valley League, which was a minor league of the Ouachita River Valley area.[1]

Later in the year area newspapers, especially the local *Observer*, reported the progress of the new Crossett baseball team. On August 9 Crossett defeated Bastrop 13 to 9. Members of this team included Lefty Butler and Harold Young, first base; Shorty Oslin, second base; Paul McDaniels, third base; Cortez (Tex) Moore, catcher; Rick Cole, right field; Frosty Davis, left field, Jerry Fryer, right field and center field; Roland Laiche and Bo Sherman, center field; Varnado, shortstop; McClain, left field; and Rob Roy McGregor and Pat White, pitcher. By the end of 1937, the Crossett Millers were well launched on a career in the league that pleased the sponsors for many years.



*This shows the first "official" baseball diamond in Crossett long before the Millers were organized. It stood just west of the first block of Main Street. Close examination of the picture will show that some of the sizeable crowd came to the game in buggies and some in cars.* (Forest Echoes *Files)*





*This is Crossett's first baseball team, orga in 1908. Top row (l.-r.): Dick Cammack Angus Erwin (3b), Eugene Broadnax (1b), (Manager), Cecil Norcutt (cf). Second ro McKimmey (p), Henry Easterling (c), Oth Roy Dooley (ss), Roy Rison (c). Several me picture. (Courtesy of W. E. Finch, Jr. &*

*Forest Echoes* for May, 1940, give organization and sponsorship of the M cording to the *Echoes* the team came primarily under the sponsorship of t residents say that the manager of the baseball enthusiast and wanted a te with the other papermills of southern Louisiana. Since almost all the prop longed to the Crossett Company an pendent businessmen, the only sponso

*This is Crossett's first baseball team, organized by E. W. "Cap" Gates in 1908. Top row (l.-r.): Dick Cammack (rf), George Rison (Booker), Angus Erwin (3b), Eugene Broadnax (1b), Billy Askin (p), E. W. Gates (Manager), Cecil Norcutt (cf). Second row: Bill Finch (lf), Vernon McKimmey (p), Henry Easterling (c), Otha Shuford (2b). Bottom row: Roy Dooley (ss), Roy Rison (c). Several members are not shown in this picture. (Courtesy of W. E. Finch, Jr. &* Forest Echoes *Files)*

*Forest Echoes* for May, 1940, gives a good insight into the organization and sponsorship of the Millers baseball team. According to the *Echoes* the team came into being in early 1937, primarily under the sponsorship of the new papermill. Local residents say that the manager of the mill at that time was a baseball enthusiast and wanted a team that could compete with the other papermills of southern Arkansas and northern Louisiana. Since almost all the property in the city then belonged to the Crossett Company and there were few independent businessmen, the only sponsors by necessity had to be



buggies and some in cars. (Forest Echoes Files)

the mill and interested individuals. Players from nearby areas were invited to join the prospective team and become papermill employees at the same time. At times these new players joined the team before a vacancy occurred at the papermill and drew their regular pay from the mill until a job opened for them.[2]

Roland Laiche joined the roster in July, 1937, first as a utility player and then as a regular, probably because of his home run power. Laiche is a colorful Cajun character from south Louisiana and was a valuable player. He once knocked a home run across the highway into Custer Ross's front yard. Previously Laiche had played with the Brown Papermill in Monroe, Louisiana. According to Laiche, the Millers regularly led the league. He says the Millers cleared the land for the playing field and did most of the work building the bleachers. The mill paid him thirty-five and forty cents an hour for his job as a painter. Laiche married Lucille Futhey, October 6, 1937. They now live at 1001 Oak Street.[3]

The first managers were John McKimmy and Cortez Moore, who also played on the team. Soon the Ouachita Valley League invited them to seek membership, and they were admitted in 1937. The *Forest Echoes* says they won the first half of the season of 1937. In the same year, they defeated the famous House of David team 10-7 and felt well launched on a baseball career. In 1940, Spike Hunter was player-manager and P.G Gates was business manager. The team was still supported by the papermill and unidentified individuals. At this time, the governing board was composed of A. C. Erwin, A. T. McDonough, and John T. Erwin. By April 20, $612 had been raised for the team. In 1940, the Millers played twenty-one home games and twenty-two out-of-town games and won first place in the Ouachita Valley League.

The war came and the team had to disband because many members enlisted in service and because of the manpower shortage in industry. However, they returned in 1946 and joined the North Louisiana League, the largest semi-pro league in that section of the country. They also refurbished the Miller's park, which had deteriorated during the war. Much of the personnel and labor were furnished by the players themselves and the papermill. Apparently no one ever questioned



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very popular with the townspeople. S
players returned but many new players
players were Paul McDaniels, Pat White
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Charles Brooks also played on this re
September issue of the *Forest Echoes* s
record was 47-17.[5]

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catching a fly ball. The mill quietly helped
the Millers Field.

The main reason for the Millers' exist
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makework the union was not too supportiv

In the later years, the Millers were a
rated as one of the best semi-pro teams.

the company's generosity with the team since the Millers were very popular with the townspeople. Some of the pre-war players returned but many new players also came. Returning players were Paul McDaniels, Pat White, Roland Laiche, Hubert Madden, Jesse Harrison, Jerry Fryer, Roscoe Morgan, Hubert Jenkins and Billy Jack Edwards. Willis Johnson and Charles Brooks also played on this returning team.[4] The September issue of the *Forest Echoes* says that the Millers' record was 47-17.[5]

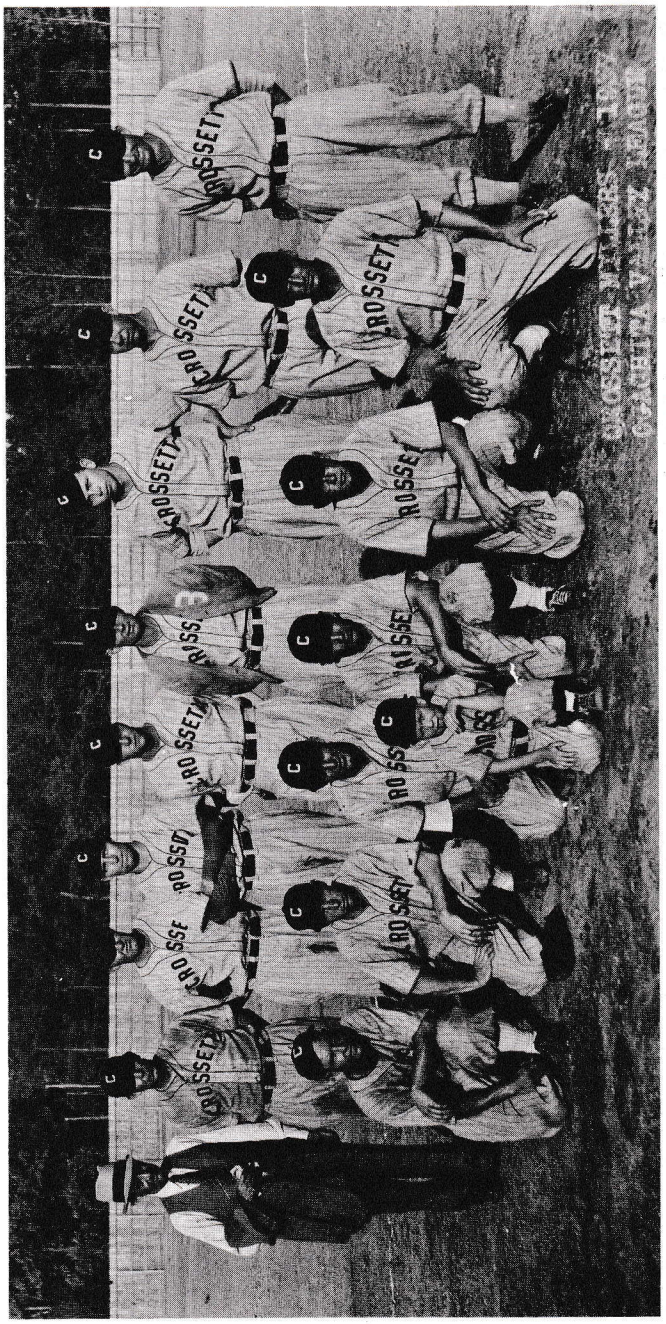
Paul McDaniels stayed with the team from the beginning until its demise. McDaniels recalls that they usually played split seasons, as did many other leagues in the area. According to McDaniels, Tex Moore recruited the team and the business manager then was John McKimmy. Players came from all around on account of the higher pay offered by the papermill.[6]

McDaniels says the attendance ranged up to 1,600 at the Millers Park and that they had the first night games of any sport in the city. For the time, the field was well lighted but it had some dark spots up high which sometimes hindered catching a fly ball. The mill quietly helped build and maintain the Millers Field.

The main reason for the Millers' existence seems to have been that other mill towns in the area had teams and the patrons enjoyed them. Naturally the people of Crossett thought a team might be of value to them. Also, the superintendent of the papermill just wanted a team, perhaps partly because it was excellent publicity, especially when the team sported a good record. The players themselves greatly enjoyed it and sometimes got a job by being on the company baseball team.

According to McDaniels, Bruce Suttle, general manager of the papermill, loved baseball and did all he could to recruit players and give them jobs. Sometimes the jobs did not require any real work, which concerned the union and management later. Two factors dealt a death blow to the Millers after the war. Suttle left and because players were sometimes given makework the union was not too supportive of the team.[7]

In the later years, the Millers were a Class C team and rated as one of the best semi-pro teams.



*Shown here is the first Millers Team. Standing (l.-r.): Bruce Suttle, Tex Moore, 'Bo' Sherman, Rob Roy McGregor, Roy Collins, "Lefty" Butler, Hubert "Pat" White, Bill Singletarry, and "Frosty" Davis. Kneeling: Rick Cole, Paul McDaniels, Doug Locke, Harold "Shorty" Oslin, Sterling McLain and Jerry "Mule" Fryer. The batboy is Stuart Belk.* (Forest Echoes Files)



Hubert White was one player wh
almost from the beginning until it dis
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Jesse Harrison of 1500 Elm Stre
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After he ceased to play in Crossett,
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team did so well that they were invited
Professional Tournament.

Harrison said the team disbanded
proper sponsorship. Most papermills
and there may have been some question
who sometimes probably did not rende

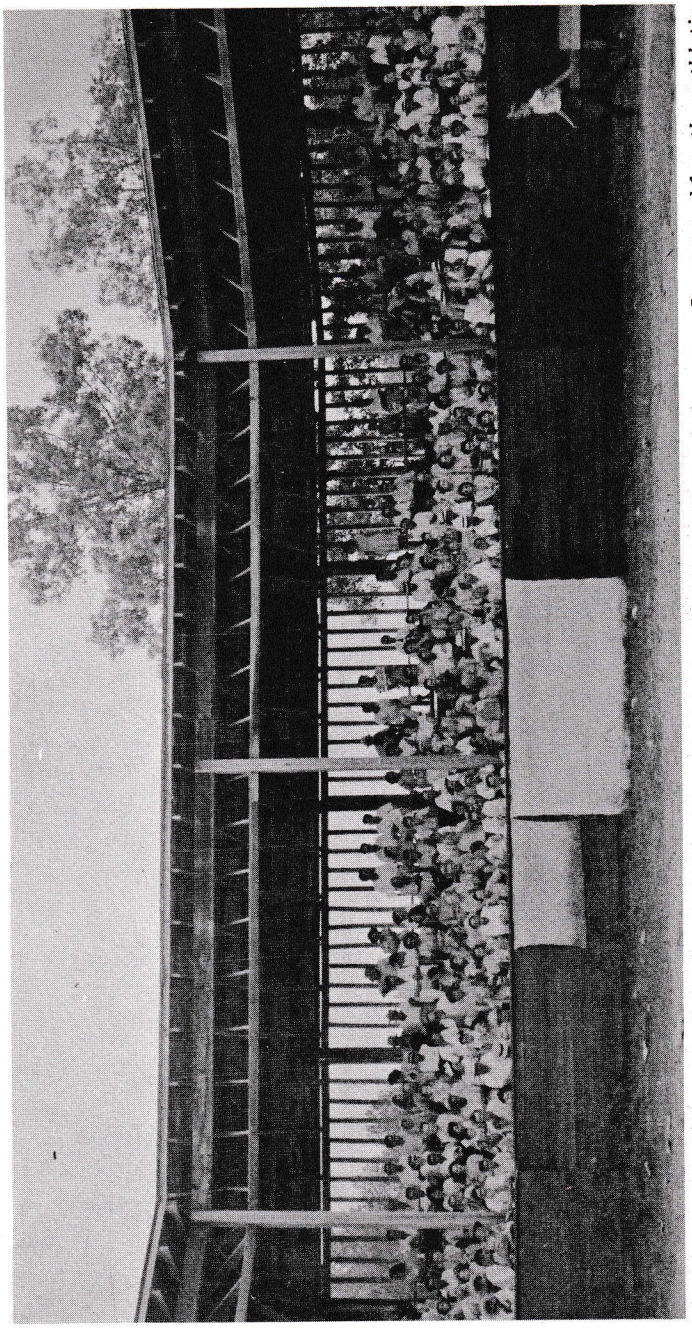
Hubert White was one player who stayed with the team almost from the beginning until it disbanded in the late Forties. He came to Crossett in March, 1937, at the time that Paul McDaniels came. He played center field and pitcher along with Jesse Harrison and Logan Pride. When the war broke up the team, he continued working in the mill and rejoined the team as an outfielder after the war. Mule Fryer, a very colorful and well-remembered player, played right field. Cortez Moore was catcher and also acted as manager for most of the life of the team. The heavy hitters on the team were Mule Fryer, Roland Laiche, Paul McDaniels, and Cortez Moore. White is now retired and lives with his wife, Lucille Jarvis, at 702 Maple.[8]

Jesse Harrison of 1500 Elm Street joined the Millers in 1939. He stayed with the team until he went into the service. Before then he had pitched with the Chicago White Sox. In 1946, he pitched for the Shreveport, Louisiana team. In 1947, he joined the Millers for he had come home when his baby was born. He also pitched five years for the Bernice, Louisiana team and stayed with the Millers between times. He remembers pitching a no-hitter for the Millers in 1946 or 1947. Harrison had also pitched for the Seabees while in service in California. He served eighteen months on Guadalcanal.

In his first full year with the Millers he won nine and lost three. Harrison was a left-handed batter and a line-driver hitter. He had made the team as an outfielder and played outfield some at Crossett. Jesse says that all papermills in this area supported their local baseball teams, which were sometimes known as papermill teams. On trips, the mill furnished fifty cents for meals. However,the greatest advantage of being on the team was that the players had a good place to work and were well treated by management. Harrison says that the wives often went along to the games and they sometimes rode a bus furnished by the company.

After he ceased to play in Crossett, he played three nights a week at Bernice and in 1950 joined the Lion Oil team. This team did so well that they were invited to the National Semi-Professional Tournament.

Harrison said the team disbanded because they lacked proper sponsorship. Most papermills quit sponsoring teams and there may have been some question about paying players who sometimes probably did not render the service expected.



*A picture of the grandstand originally built by the Millers team for spectators at their games. It was used for other athletic activities for many years. Note the screening from the roof to the railing for protection from wayward balls.* (Forest Echoes *Files)*



However, after the team disbanded, with the mills in their usual jobs. H Martha Robbins and they have one so

Mike McDaniels, local dentist and one of the main players on the Millers te cot of the team during the last three yea took care of all equipment such as hats, buckets. Dr. McDaniels remembers th wool uniforms with sliding pads.

When the team reorganized after t to play in Millers Park, which had bec war as the rodeo field. This area was Junior High School and well suited for as rodeo, baseball, football, and track. the Millers had bathrooms, dressin rooms. Many games were on Sunday af July was a special time for a good game always drew a good crowd. Later in t were played at night.

Though a bus was used for travel traveled in cars but the company paid t times on bus trips the players would sh their destination or until some membe money. In the latter case the others wou him or go hungry.[10]

Of all those interviewed, not a disp about this team. It was a wonderful asse the area in a very critical period of th

## Notes on Chapter S

1 *Arkansas Gazette*, February 27, 1937.
2 *Forest Echoes*, (May, 1940).
3 Interview with Roland Laiche.
4 *Forest Echoes*, (April, 1947)
5 *Ibid.*, (September, 1947).
6 Interview with Paul McDaniels.
7 *Ibid.*
8 Interview with Hubert White.
9 Interview with Jesse Harrison.
10 Interview with Dr. Mike McDaniels.

However, after the team disbanded, the players continued with the mills in their usual jobs. Harrison is married to Martha Robbins and they have one son, Kenneth Lane.[9]

Mike McDaniels, local dentist and son of Paul McDaniels, one of the main players on the Millers team, was batboy or mascot of the team during the last three years of its existence. Mike took care of all equipment such as hats, gloves, bats, and water buckets. Dr. McDaniels remembers that the team wore gray wool uniforms with sliding pads.

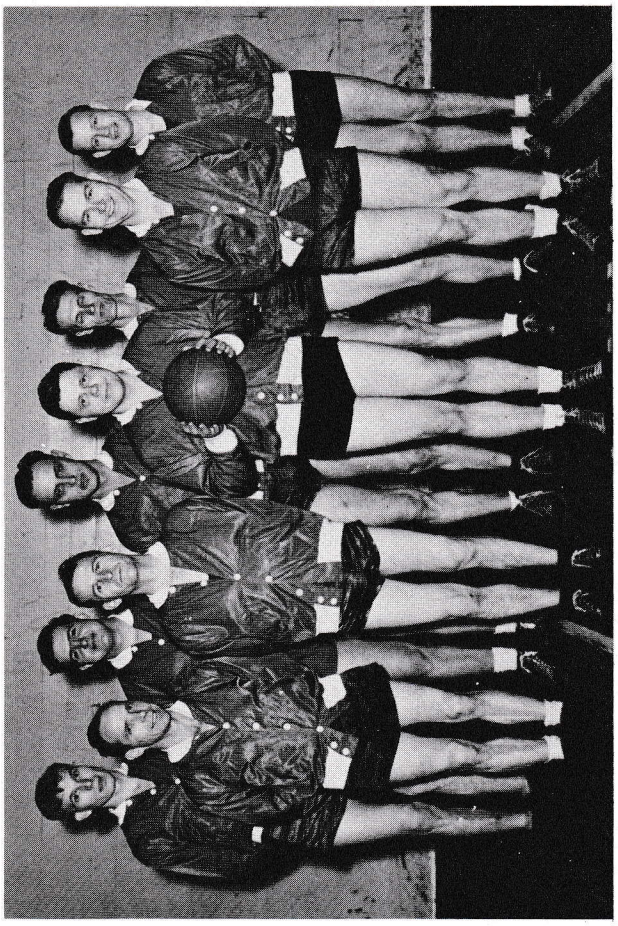
When the team reorganized after the war, they continued to play in Millers Park, which had become known during the war as the rodeo field. This area was just south of Norman Junior High School and well suited for athletic activities such as rodeo, baseball, football, and track. The bleachers built by the Millers had bathrooms, dressing rooms, and storage rooms. Many games were on Sunday afternoon. The Fourth of July was a special time for a good game at Millers Park and it always drew a good crowd. Later in the period many games were played at night.

Though a bus was used for travel at times, they usually traveled in cars but the company paid the gasoline bills. Sometimes on bus trips the players would shoot craps all the way to their destination or until some member had won all the lunch money. In the latter case the others would have to borrow from him or go hungry.[10]

Of all those interviewed, not a disparaging word was said about this team. It was a wonderful asset to the community and the area in a very critical period of the town's life.

## Notes on Chapter Seven

[1] *Arkansas Gazette*, February 27, 1937.
[2] *Forest Echoes*, (May, 1940).
[3] Interview with Roland Laiche.
[4] *Forest Echoes*, (April, 1947)
[5] *Ibid.*, (September, 1947).
[6] Interview with Paul McDaniels.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] Interview with Hubert White.
[9] Interview with Jesse Harrison.
[10] Interview with Dr. Mike McDaniels.



*The 1946 Millers basketball players all worked for the paper mills. Front row (l.-r.): Paul McDaniels, "Mutt" Davis, Harold Moffatt, Jessie Harrison. Back row: Clifton Pendergrass, James Walser, Edwin Johnston, Wesley Johnston, Paul Ragland. The Millers scored 734 points and gave up 652 points. Their playing manager was Harold Moffatt and their business manager was Roland Wilbur.* (Forest Echoes Files)



# CHAPTER

## The Crossett Ridin

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arena and a spectacular rodeo each fall t
of the organization and they began to see

# CHAPTER 8

## The Crossett Riding Club

A rodeo was secondary to the organizers of the Crossett Riding Club.[1] According to Mrs. Robert Parkhill, the organization had three purposes in the beginning: 1. Riding together through the woods and trails to places such as Switzer's Dog House and Sulphur Springs; 2. To teach the children in riding and horsemanship; and 3. To plan a rodeo and horse show. However, long before the initial meeting at which the officers were elected, the group had already been going on trail rides and picnics.

According to *Forest Echoes* for August 1948, the Crossett Riding Club was officially formed early in 1948. Norman Beardsley was elected president, Bob Parkhill, vice president; Russell Bell, secretary; and Vaskell Carter, treasurer. Directors elected at this meeting were Clyde Howard, Elzie Lucky, Joe Rawls, Harry Stephens and Joe Varnell. Other members at the organizational meeting were Edgar Stephens, Ovid Switzer, Birdie Clark, Harry Parkhill, Joe Varnell, E. E. Lucky, and Jewell Noble. All these men were enthusiastic about just having a good time, caring for horses, riding the trails and woods, and enjoying a family picnic at the end of each trail ride.[2]

However, soon after organization, the thought of a rodeo arena and a spectacular rodeo each fall thrilled the members of the organization and they began to see the possibilities of a

gala rodeo week each year. But a stadium and facilities for livestock and a parade ground were all necessities unless they continued to use Millers Park where they had held all their impromptu meetings. Robert Parkhill had furnished portable stalls and chutes for the riding stock, which was then all local. Millers Park was not adequate for a big, attractive rodeo and crowds of thousands of people. Besides, many other events were held at Millers Park and it would not always be available.[3]

They decided to begin building the Crossett Rodeo Arena, which became the Cap Gates Arena since it was built on his home site on the east side of Crossett. The members and friends of the Riding Club built the arena. Wayne Smith made the blueprints without charge. Peter F. Watzek and the Crossett Company gave the site for the arena. D. F. Gadberry made the bleachers with the help of his students and members of the Riding Club.

At building time, the Club had $200, and the material alone would cost more than that. However, the members and many friends continued to give for the building project and the treasury never ran dry. Donations of every kind were offered as well as labor. But the work slowed in the winter and resumed with more vigor in the summer of 1949.[4] The first barn was an old wagon shed moved from the old gin north of the lumber yards. Usually, the members and friends worked on the arena three nights a week and often gave many more hours of work as their personal work schedule permitted. Members and friends constantly gave money or material for the arena.

As the arena was being completed, the question of the type rodeo confronted the members. Should they have a strictly local rodeo? Experience with the local rodeo was not good. Usually such an effort continued only two or three years and then interest and activity dwindled. They wanted something permanent that the town could be proud of in the future. It was decided that only Cowboy Association members and stock would be used and they accordingly planned the first rodeo.[5]

The first annual rodeo was held in Crossett by the Crossett Riding Club in August, 1949. It was produced by Morris Kimbell of Paris, Texas August 23-25. Every merchant in the city participated, as well as businessmen from other towns. It was



the finest rodeo attraction in south Ar
time, people could see a really good ro
Monroe or Shreveport, Louisiana or Littl
Little Rock, executive secretary of the Li
Rock and a state senator, was the chie
night. The crowd was overflowing and th
saw how short their vision was. On Wed
nor Sid McMath led the parade and gra
the crowd from horseback. The stands
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Night.

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bilities, several new members joined, inc
Otto Noble, Dick Meredith, John Titus
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beginning. Then there is the challenge to
while for your city. Perhaps a principal
own town and area. Perhaps, also, the
factor as exemplified by the grand entr
grand entry, he has arrived for the time
be back for the next grand entry, too."

No person is allowed to make a dime
activities. All profits are used to improv
the rodeo itself or for some of the civic org
Boosters Club has often manned the co
used the proceeds for the Crossett High

the finest rodeo attraction in south Arkansas. For the first time, people could see a really good rodeo without going to Monroe or Shreveport, Louisiana or Little Rock. Clyde Byrd of Little Rock, executive secretary of the Livestock Show in Little Rock and a state senator, was the chief speaker on opening night. The crowd was overflowing and the club members soon saw how short their vision was. On Wednesday night, Governor Sid McMath led the parade and grand entry and spoke to the crowd from horseback. The stands were packed for each performance and the final night was designated Family Night.

In these early days, members of the club did all the work connected with the show. They worked the gates for the chutes, staffed the ticket office, ran the concession stands and kept the grounds clean. Club members did not get an opportunity to see all the show, viewing just snatches as their work allowed.

Dick Meredith was parade marshal and led riders from clubs all over north Louisiana and south Arkansas in the downtown parade and the grand entry at the arena. The mayors of Crossett and Hamburg designated this period as Rodeo Week.[6] As a result of this successful rodeo and the seeming possibilities, several new members joined, including Wayne Smith, Otto Noble, Dick Meredith, John Titus, Dr. W. R. Cothern, Bill Utter, Ellis Hart, Reginald Tatum, Forest Rice, and Dr. N. B. Pearah. It was evident that the Crossett Riding Club had a successful program underway.

The Crossett Rodeo has continued to grow until today it is one of the finest such attractions in the tri-state area.[7] Mrs. Parkhill was asked "Why do they do it?" She says, "Perhaps the love of horses is the chief factor in it all and especially in the beginning. Then there is the challenge to do something worthwhile for your city. Perhaps a principal factor is love for one's own town and area. Perhaps, also, the wish to show off is a factor as exemplified by the grand entry. If one rides in the grand entry, he has arrived for the time being though he will be back for the next grand entry, too."

No person is allowed to make a dime of profit out of rodeo activities. All profits are used to improve facilities, upgrade the rodeo itself or for some of the civic organizations. The Band Boosters Club has often manned the concession stands and used the proceeds for the Crossett High School Band.

*One of the first organized family rides in 1948 which ended with a picnic supper. U denotes those unidentified. Back row (l.-r.): Mary K. Carter, E. E. Lucky, U, U, Ann Meredith Hilgeman, Nancy Stephens Toon, U, Edna Green, U, Harry Stephens, John Stratton, Becky Bell, Mrs. Henry Stephens, Joe Varnell, U, Ovid Switzer. Second row: Kay Beardsley, Merle Parkhill, Ruby Howard, Helen Rice with daughter Cheryl, U, U, U, U, U, U, Tommy Stephens. Front row standing: Harry Parkhill (leaning on car), Dr. Norman Pearah (white pants), Doris Pearah, Betty Ruth Parkhill, Sue Parkhill, Pattie Lucky, Amelia Bell, Eva Lucky, U, Bertie Stephens, Hazel Parkhill, Marguerite Switzer, Marie Stephens, Vera Stephens. Bottom row kneeling: Russell Bell with Marietta Bell and others unidentified.* (Forest Echoes *Files*)



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featured the longest parade ever seen
time. Rodeo parades have gotten much
more riding clubs, merchants, scho
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teen events with notables present inc
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1953 event was among the best. *Forest E*
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Stephens was designated the best turne
Mrs. W. V. Garnier of Bastrop the be
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Cooter Riding Club, Opossum Holler
Moonshiners Riding Club of West Cro
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rode the woods pony and a few sported ba
land ponies. But the whole idea was fu
and both were well represented that year

The first rodeo held in Crossett by the Riding Club in 1949 featured the longest parade ever seen in Crossett up to that time. Rodeo parades have gotten much longer since then and more riding clubs, merchants, schools, bands and other organizations have furnished floats and participated in the parades. The first Rodeo Queen was Miss Merle Foote and she was crowned sitting in her saddle.

*Pulp and Paper Daily* of September 29, 1949, said of the first such event, "The biggest, best and only rodeo staged by paper men took place at Crossett. It had a full program of eighteen events with notables present including Governor Sid McMath and Senator Byrd. Big Rider Beardsley led in building the park from a balance of $250. The park cost $15,000."[8]

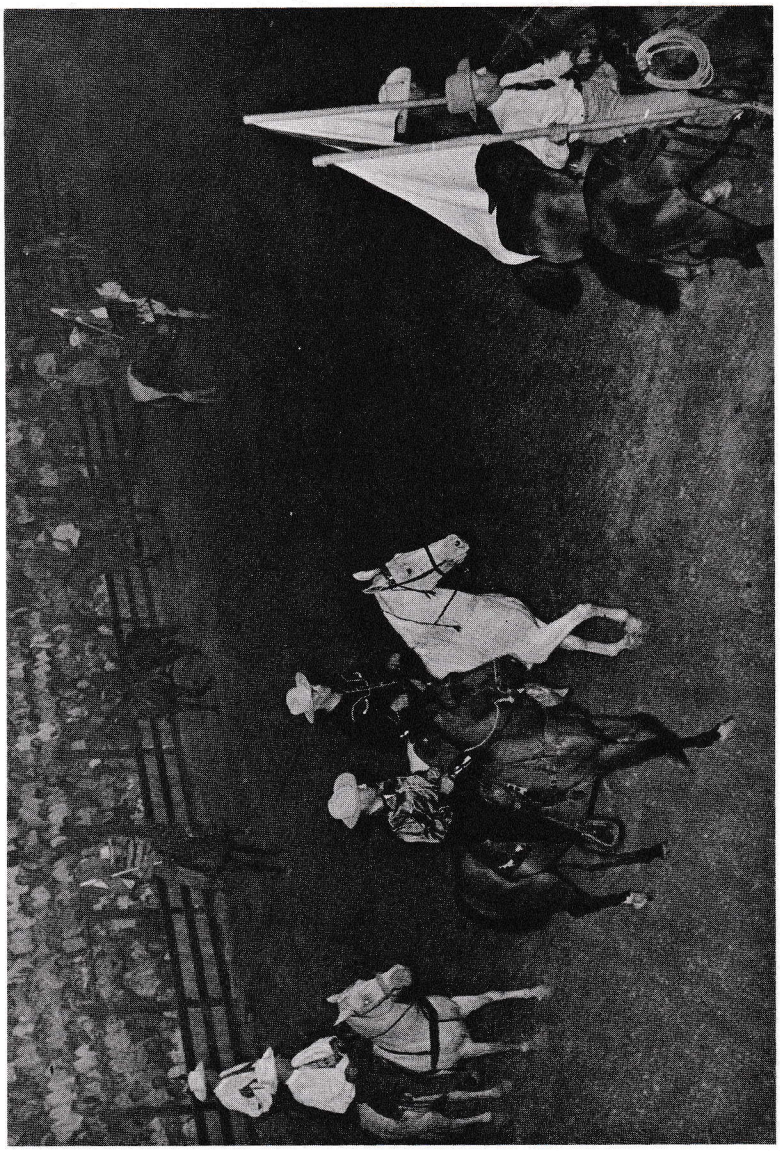
The Rodeo has continued to grow from year to year and people expect each year to be better than the year before. The 1953 event was among the best. *Forest Echoes* reported that the fifth year of the rodeo saw 10,000 people pour into the arena. Miss Bettye Will Larche was elected Rodeo Queen. Harry Stephens was designated the best turned-out male rider and Mrs. W. V. Garnier of Bastrop the best turned-out female rider. The Crossett mills had the best float.[9]

In 1956 15,000 jammed the arena. In that year, Miss Charlotte Jones was elected Rodeo Queen and visitors flowed into town from all over the tri-state area.[10]

Mrs. Parkhill's typed notes in August, 1969, indicate something of the popularity of the Crossett Riding Club Rodeo. Riding clubs represented in 1969 came from as far away as Monticello, Arkansas and Vidalia, Louisiana. Clubs all came from close around, small clubs and huge organizations. Some of these riding clubs had strange sounding names like the Cooter Riding Club, Opossum Holler Riding Club and the Moonshiners Riding Club of West Crossett. Every type of horseflesh was represented in the parade in 1969 as is usually true of the Crossett Rodeo. Some rode fine purebred horses costing hundreds or even thousands of dollars while others rode the woods pony and a few sported bareback mules or shetland ponies. But the whole idea was fun and neighborliness and both were well represented that year as in all other years.



*Parkhill, Marguerite Sanzer, Marie Stephens, Vera Stephens, Dalton Fox, Mrs. Bell with Marietta Bell and others unidentified. (Forest Echoes Files)*





*(Photo opposite page) The Grand Entry at th*
*sponsored by the Crossett Riding Club at the*
*the parade with the flags in the extreme right f*
*and Bob Parkhill. In the center is Governor*
*horse and Norman Beardsley, club presiden*
*left foreground is Morris Kimball, the Rodeo*
*Hub Whiteman, bulldogger. (Courtesy of Bo*

The Crossett Riding Club and the
to grow in the 1980's as they have in
*News Observer* for August 20, 1980, say
year was one of the best ever in terms
biggest gate receipt amounting to appr
four nights were a huge success and t
perfectly. Saturday night drew, as us
with the entire seating area filled to
testants represented thirteen states an
in prize money. Sixty-eight purses we
lady barrel racers.

Kenny Dahl won the highest pur
money. Roy Carpes of Durant, Oklaho
winner with a purse of $785.34. Mis
Shreveport, Louisiana won the lady's
However, three Arkansas cowboys to
among them Eddie Deshazo of Conway
Hope, and Kenny Wilcox of Greenbrie

Beautiful Kathy Barnett, a local gi
Queen and Willie Barnett, her father, w
the riding club for 1980. Valerie Win
Oklahoma was selected as Miss Congen
Mer Rouge, Louisiana was runner-up
Brooks and the Women's Golf Assoc
Country Club had the top prize float and
group from the local Mormon Church
float and the Ashley County Shriners
The Renee Stokes School of Dance exhi
float.

Five top riding clubs were prese
Silver Spur Riding Club of Lake Villag
Club of Crossett and Ashley County,
Club, 4. The Cossey Family Riders of Eu

*(Photo opposite page) The Grand Entry at the first Rodeo performance sponsored by the Crossett Riding Club at the Cap Gates Arena. Leading the parade with the flags in the extreme right foreground are Joe Varnell and Bob Parkhill. In the center is Governor Sid McMath on the dark horse and Norman Beardsley, club president, on the white horse. In the left foreground is Morris Kimball, the Rodeo producer. Behind him is Hub Whiteman, bulldogger. (Courtesy of Bob Parkhill)*

The Crossett Riding Club and the Crossett Rodeo continue to grow in the 1980's as they have in the past. The Crossett *News Observer* for August 20, 1980, says that the rodeo for that year was one of the best ever in terms of attendance with the biggest gate receipt amounting to approximately $35,000. All four nights were a huge success and the weather cooperated perfectly. Saturday night drew, as usual, the largest crowd with the entire seating area filled to capacity. Rodeo contestants represented thirteen states and competed for $20,000 in prize money. Sixty-eight purses were paid to cowboys and lady barrel racers.

Kenny Dahl won the highest purse with $925.34 prize money. Roy Carpes of Durant, Oklahoma was second money winner with a purse of $785.34. Miss Peggy Stoddard of Shreveport, Louisiana won the lady's barrel racing event. However, three Arkansas cowboys took home good money, among them Eddie Deshazo of Conway, Broadus Gravette of Hope, and Kenny Wilcox of Greenbrier.

Beautiful Kathy Barnett, a local girl, was crowned Rodeo Queen and Willie Barnett, her father, was elected president of the riding club for 1980. Valerie Winchester of Claremore, Oklahoma was selected as Miss Congeniality. Amy Johnson of Mer Rouge, Louisiana was runner-up to Queen Kathy. Alma Brooks and the Women's Golf Association of the Prairie Country Club had the top prize float and were awarded $125. A group from the local Mormon Church had the second-place float and the Ashley County Shriners Club won third prize. The Renee Stokes School of Dance exhibited the fourth-place float.

Five top riding clubs were presented trophies: 1. The Silver Spur Riding Club of Lake Village, 2. Wrangler Riding Club of Crossett and Ashley County, 3. The Wilmot Riding Club, 4. The Cossey Family Riders of Eudora, Arkansas, and 5.

The Milo Riding Club of Milo, Arkansas. Each night a big ham was given to a contestant chosen at random.

Great credit is due Mrs. Robert Parkhill for loaning the author much material about the Crossett Riding Club which she gathered through the years. This material consisted of newspaper columns, letters to the editor, many pictures, material from *Pulp and Paper* and articles from papers in other cities. Especially helpful was an interview with Mrs. Parkhill and her husband, Bob, on July 11, 1980, in their home on Highway 82 in Crossett.

*Rider Bob Parkhill on Vaskell Carter's horse Goodman. Parkhill and Carter have been very active in the Riding Club from the organization's beginning.* (Forest Echoes *Files)*



## Notes on Chapter Ei

1 *Forest Echoes*, (August, 1948).
2 Interview with Mrs. Robert Parkhill, July
3 *Ibid.*
4 *The News Observer*, August 9, 1978.
5 *Ibid.*, Hazel Parkhill, August 9, 1978.
6 *Ibid.*
7 Hazel Parkhill notes, August, 1969.
8 *Pulp and Paper Products Convention Daily*
9 *Forest Echoes*, (August, 1953).
10 *Ibid.*, (September, 1956).

## Notes on Chapter Eight

[1] *Forest Echoes*, (August, 1948).
[2] Interview with Mrs. Robert Parkhill, July 11, 1980.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *The News Observer*, August 9, 1978.
[5] *Ibid.*, Hazel Parkhill, August 9, 1978.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Hazel Parkhill notes, August, 1969.
[8] *Pulp and Paper Products Convention Daily*, September 29, 1949.
[9] *Forest Echoes*, (August, 1953).
[10] *Ibid.*, (September, 1956).

# CHAPTER 9

## The Rose, the Whistle and the Smokestack

Crossett has no stately old buildings, erected by proud entrepreneurs early in the century. There are no beautiful columned residences along any of the streets that testify to the pride, culture and even greed of early pioneers. There are not even any ancient church buildings that remind one how it used to be at the turn of the century. Even the old school buildings are gone and not a trace remains of the old green school presided over so many years by the venerable superintendent D. C. Hastings. Only two buildings date prior to the Twenties, the Masonic building and the old bank building on Main Street on the right side of block one. Even the old depots are gone or moved or radically changed.

Only old trees remain to remind one of the cool peacefulness of a bygone generation but plenty of these mighty monarchs still line the streets, even on Main Street. Some of these majestic oak, hickory, elm and maple trees were here when DeSoto camped nearby on his way to a watery grave in the mighty Mississippi. Each spring some of the old trees on Main, Pine, Oak, and Beech Streets fall to the gnawing termites or the raging winds and leave a little less of what Cap Gates learned to love so much about the area that became Crossett, his homesite and the place where his mill made him and many others rich. However, residents have planted other trees

all over the city to shade the town when the ancient monarchs fall to rest and they, too, are beautiful and help to make Crossett one of the most attractive little cities in America.

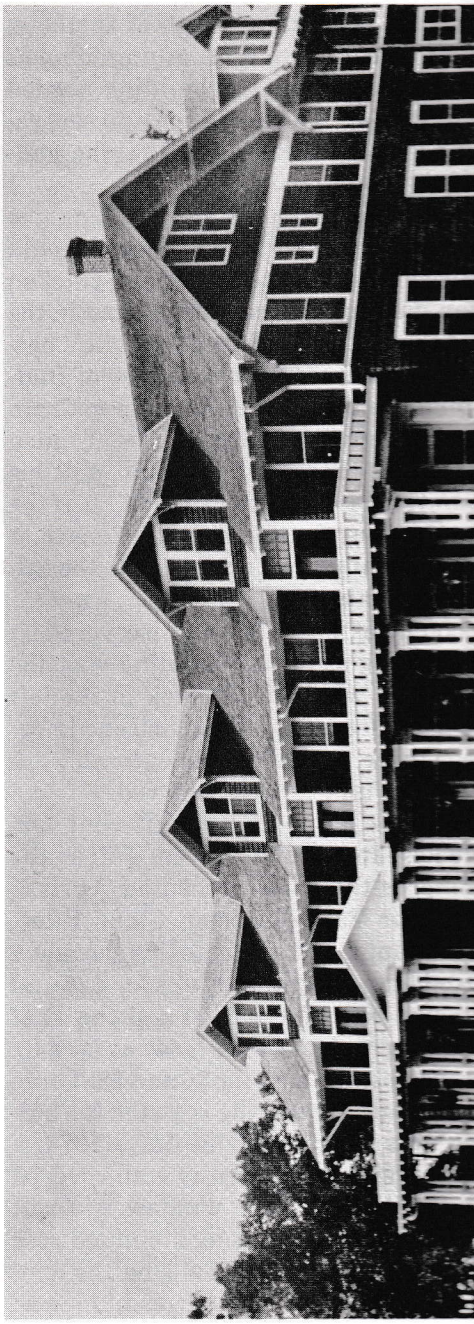
Residents could always depend on three things as markedly fitting and proper in their city. These three things have also gone the way of newness and progress and will never be seen again. They were the Rose Inn, the mill whistle and the smokestack, all vitally important in their day.

The Rose Inn was the state's most picturesque hostelry for over fifty years, until the new owners, Georgia Pacific, decided that it could stand the ravages of time no longer. So, in June of 1973, this beautiful monument ceased to be. According to Kenneth Crain, purchasing manager of the Georgia Pacific Corporation in Crossett, the decision was made to sell everything in the building that was movable and then salvage the lumber and other material remaining.

A big question for the owners was how to be fair with everyone about the mementos in the old structure that almost every citizen wished to own. The Junior Chamber of Commerce was allowed to auction off all mementos and use their profit for debt retirement on the Carousel, a facility for retarded children. A time was set for the auction on a Friday evening and Saturday and great crowds attended, standing all over the front yard, on the sidewalks and in almost every part of the venerable hostelry. As Cap Gates is said to have commented about events in Crossett, "Everyone in Crossett came." A rose plate, one with a large rose painted on it, sold for $17.50. One lady bought all remaining rose plates. Most of the remaining serving plates were ultimately taken to the salvage operation where many sold to deer camps for as little as five dollars a set. All fixtures were sold on bid and everything movable was auctioned off.

When asked why the Rose Inn had to be disposed of, Crain was factual and frank in his reply. The reasons were practical from the businessman's viewpoint. It was in sad disrepair. People had almost ceased using it as a hotel; few people ever stayed in the second story and the third story was closed. Besides, the company had built an annex adjacent to the hotel with the latest of furnishings in 1948 and the hotel furnishings could not compete with the annex. Commodes, bathrooms and even the rooms themselves were not up to modern standards.





*The hospitable Rose Inn in its early years. Note the beautiful wrought iron fence. Through the years it had several kinds of fencing to set off the attractive lawn. The street in front is an unpaved, ungraveled dirt road.* (Forest Echoes *Files*)

The cost of repair and actual rebuilding much of the hotel would have been enormous. A complete replumbing job was essential and all the wiring throughout the building needed replacing. Termites had destroyed the foundation and several feet up the walls all around. Another reason was that the company wished to get out of the hotel business.

Crain tells some interesting incidents surrounding the hotel. A chicken lived under the porch of the hotel and would cross the street. All traffic carefully halted when the chicken wished to cross. A spittoon made of crockery was found in the attic. On one of the sills of the Hotel was found Ty Cobb's batting average. Although Crossett is a dry town, a case of Budweiser beer bottles was found in the attic. According to Crain all lumber was sold on a first come, first serve basis at much less than market value. For instance, a man could pull his pickup truck onto the lot and load it up for perhaps $2.50. If the lumber was selected, like all two-by-fours of a certain length, it would cost a little more. Hardly anything was taken to the salvage yard except remaining lumber.

A late roomer at the hotel was a hive of bees discovered by workmen, still alive and working as the old building was dismantled. They lived inside the walls in the back to the left about three feet from the back door. Apparently no one knew how long the bees had been there. Bits of the honeycomb were found on the ground when the lumber was removed.[1]

The Crossett *News Observer* has a slightly different version of the wrecking of the Rose Inn. It was auctioned off by the Junior Chamber of Commerce the week preceding April 6, 1973.[2] Auctioneers were Mayor Vaskell Carter, Claud Riley, Jr., and T. P. Kelley of Mississippi. According to this account a sugar bowl sold for $10, and four-legged bathtubs for $26 and $28. The Dogwood Room sign went for $32.50 and the Leaf Room sign for $27.50. A photograph of the mills went for $40. The old louvered doors to the upstairs sold for $6 and $8. Three hundred buyers from eight states signed the register for bidding. When the building was dismantled in July, 1973, a stained glass window was found in the stairway wall covered over with wall paper and wallboard. The window is about three by two and a half feet with a single long-stemmed rose through the middle. No one seems to know how long the window had been there, who placed it, or why it was hidden so



long. It is probably a memorial to Cap
Rose.

Two menus have been found showi
was at the hotel in the early years as wel
Friday, December 25, 1914, is:

| | |
|---|---|
| Dinner: | Hardc |
| Giblet soup Anglais | Nut |
| Olives | Ora |
| Suet pickles | Whi |
| Escalloped oysters | ca |
| Roast young turkey and sage stuffing | |
| Baked yams | |
| Mashed white potatoes | |
| Spinach with egg | |
| Cranberry jelly | |
| Christmas salad | |
| Frozen grape juice punch | |
| English plum pudding | ALL |

The next menu was the Rose Inn
Hampshire Club, a National Conventio
follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oyster soup | Red c |
| Celery hearts | Arkar |
| Ashley County radishes | Vinai |
| Ashley County wild turkey | Ashle cha |
| Oyster dressing | yam |
| Cranberry sauce | Chick |
| Ashley County quail on toast | Arkar Stutt |
| Rasher Hampshire bacon | chee Arkar |
| Roast pork | pie |
| Young venison | Ashle |

Coffee, cigars

To be served to guests of the Cr
Club on the evening of November
C. J. Boardman
Proprietor
Crossett, Arkansas

long. It is probably a memorial to Cap Gates' beautiful wife, Rose.

Two menus have been found showing how elegant service was at the hotel in the early years as well as later. One menu for Friday, December 25, 1914, is:

Dinner:
- Giblet soup Anglais
- Olives
- Suet pickles
- Escalloped oysters
- Roast young turkey and sage stuffing
- Baked yams
- Mashed white potatoes
- Spinach with egg
- Cranberry jelly
- Christmas salad
- Frozen grape juice punch
- English plum pudding

Hardcase:
- Nuts and raisins
- Oranges and apples
- White and dark fruit cake

ALL FOR 50¢

The next menu was the Rose Inn Menu for the Crossett Hampshire Club, a National Convention of the club. The menu follows:

- Oyster soup
- Celery hearts
- Ashley County radishes
- Ashley County wild turkey
- Oyster dressing
- Cranberry sauce
- Ashley County quail on toast
- Rasher Hampshire bacon
- Roast pork
- Young venison
- Red currant jelly
- Arkansas asparagus Vinaigrette
- Ashley County (world champion) candied yams
- Chicken salad
- Arkansas green apple pie
- Stuttgart, Arkansas cheese
- Arkansas sweet potato pie
- Ashley mixed nuts

Coffee, cigars

To be served to guests of the Crossett Hampshire Club on the evening of November 20, 1920.
C. J. Boardman
Proprietor
Crossett, Arkansas

You are especially invited to attend a
Banquet to be given by

**Crossett Mercantile Company**

to employees
at the

**Rose Inn**

on Friday evening, January the tenth,
one thousand nine hundred and thirteen
at eight o'clock

*A copy of the engraved invitation that invited Frank Hancock, then an employee of the Mercantile Company at a Camp store, to a banquet held at the Rose Inn January 10, 1913. The hotel burned in November of the same year and was soon rebuilt. (Courtesy of Frank Hancock)*

*In 1945 four of the waitresses posed before the banquet tables in the dining room of the Rose Inn. (l.-r.): Edith Walker (hostess), Della Bates, Effie Huffman, and Ruth Kelly. In this picture the women were prepared to serve the Crossett Rotary Club, which met at the Rose Inn every Thursday noon. (*Forest Echoes *Files)*



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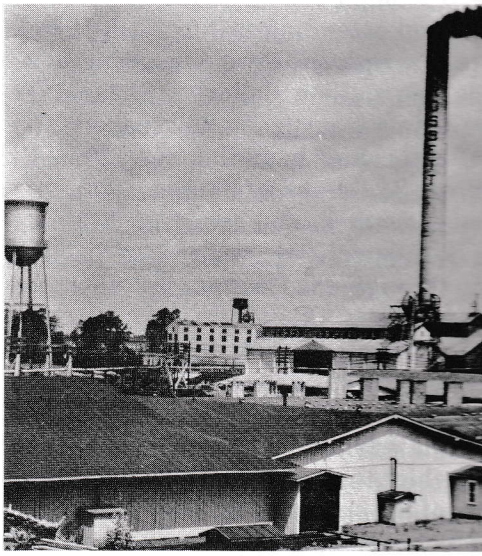

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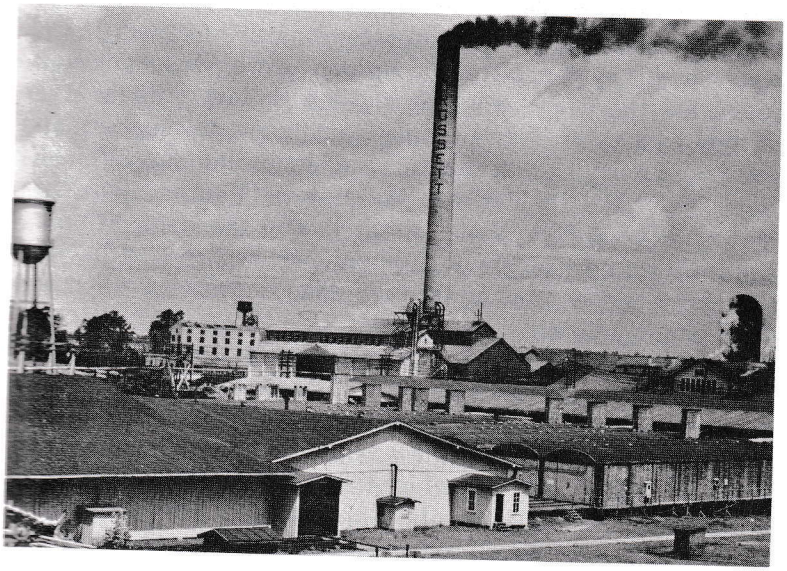
Files)*

The second of the three monuments of the city that has been deliberately, though maybe necessarily, destroyed was the famous smokestack at the sawmill. This towering stack of brick and concrete was thought for many years to be the tallest smokestack in the southland by residents of the city. It was the first thing one saw in the city as he approached from any direction and could be seen for many miles away towering above the rolling hills and majestic pine trees. Coming from the east people saw the smokestack as far away as the prairie about midway between Hamburg and Crossett. To the south it was visible as far away as Hickory Grove, also about six miles away. On a clear day, people thought they saw it from much farther distances, and perhaps they did. It seemed to many that it was the center of activity of all the mills, though its value to the papermills may have been minimal.



*This 275-foot smokestack was built in 1923-1924 when the Crossett Company converted from steam to electricity. Painting the smokestack took seven or eight weeks to complete and 175 gallons of mauve gray paint for two coats. It was dynamited by Georgia Pacific in April, 1978 because it cost between $7,000 to $8,000 a year to change a beacon light in it that lasted less than a year. The Company paid almost $14,000 to destroy it. Many of the broken pieces have been used to build an attractive fence lining a driveway in a home nearby.* (Forest Echoes *Files)*

The *News Observer* gives an account of the demolition of this tower in their issue of April 26, 1978.[3] According to this account the smokestack was 280 feet tall and took two years to build. It almost immediately became a landmark of the area and stood for fifty-eight years. Though workmen labored two years to build this tower, it took dynamite only eleven seconds to demolish. The explosion came on Saturday morning at 11:00 with the time moved back to prevent too large a crowd from assembling to watch. Ram, Incorporated, a local firm, had the primary demolition contract and Vernon Flemister and Asa Craig pushed the plunger at 10:59.

The blast from the explosive carried a reading of two on the Richter Scale and the tremor from the blast was felt five miles away. However, the blast and the placing of the explosive were so expertly done that windows in adjoining buildings were not broken. The stack toppled to the west and hit the ground almost intact. The top extending 280 feet out. It took sixty pounds of dynamite to wreck the tower. Insurance coverage for the event was one million dollars with another million as a rider. News teams from many newspapers and radio and television stations came, including KATV in El Dorado, KNOE in Monroe, *The Monroe Morning World* in Monroe, *The Ashley News Observer*, and the *Ashley County Leader*. Though the time of demolition was moved back, a shudder seemed to pass through the community when the smokestack actually ceased to be.

Hazen Bryant came to Crossett July 22, 1922, and was employed as manager of the Power Plant for many years. Now in his eighties, he tells the story of the smokestack as well as anyone. According to Bryant, he was the first outside electrician hired for a job in the mill, which then consisted only of the sawmill. He saw the building of the smokestack. The hole for the tower was twenty-seven feet with 25-foot pilings below. This hole was filled for twenty-five feet with steel and concrete to support the smokestack. The stack itself was twenty-seven feet at the bottom, thirteen feet at the top, and 274 feet high.

According to Bryant, firebrick lined the walls for 150 feet up. Bryant himself placed the steel rods in the bottom of the hole. The idea for the towering pile of concrete and brick was to secure natural draft to the boilers since there were then no electric fans to force a draft. Henry Stephens, a local con-



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tractor, did all the dirt work for the smokestack and used mule teams and a dirt slip manned by his own crew.

It took a week to prepare for the demolition but it fell in twenty seconds. Holes were drilled around the bottom and dynamite placed at strategic intervals. According to Bryant, it was not only sound economics to destroy this revered structure but also practical for safety. The entire smokestack seemed to have rotted. Evidently, it would have fallen some time in the future. In a thunderstorm or high wind it possibly would have fallen, perhaps killing residents and employees.[4]

A famous institution of the city for almost all the years of its history was the mill whistle. It was located on the roof of the boiler room but it seemed sometimes to whistle from the smokestack. This instrument was not just one pipe as so many suppose or just one whistle but a ring of whistles arranged to blow in unison. The first whistle they tried failed to operate, so they gathered up four more and placed all five in a ring in various locations. This created the effect of a powerful steamboat whistle. Bryant apparently helped arrange this system, which had a long and mournful sound. Some thought the whistle had a wild-cat-like sound, much like a siren. The whistle stopped blowing when the sawmill closed down.

The magic of the whistle was that it controlled the activities of the residents for so many years. Almost everything they did was ordered by the blast of the sawmill whistle. It blew at 5:00 a.m., 6:15 a.m., and 7:00 a.m. It blew at 12:00 noon for lunch and again at 12:45 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. for work time. In the early days, electricity was scarce and time for use of electric lights was limited, so the whistle blew when lights were to be turned off at night as well as when the families were to arise in the morning. It literally regulated the lives of the people throughout the year. On some occasions, a man would get lost in the woods and the sawmill would close down and all able-bodied men would help search for the lost person. To aid in the hunt, the mill whistle would blow at regular intervals, usually long blasts, so that the lost one could guide himself out of the woods.

Since the whistle blew, for many years on Sundays as well as work days, church services were regularly closed on time before the whistle blew, for some men had to go to work then. A visiting minister unaware of the situation preached on past the

whistle time. The next Sunday, so goes the story, the mill whistle blew unusually long and the worshippers afterward got out of service on time.

Bill Perdue worked for the Crossett Company at the last of its log camps and was assistant plant manager under Jack Carter. He remembers the sound as a steam-whistle, shrill and very loud, sometimes audible as far away as Hamburg, fifteen miles distant.[5]

Lonnie Gibbs, assistant plant manager many years and now retired and still living in the city, states that the whistle was on the boiler.[6] When the sawmills closed, the whistles ceased to blow and he does not remember that a whistle blew at all on Sundays. All those interviewed agree that the mill whistle, however and whenever it blew, regulated the lives of residents to a remarkable degree. Most say that they still miss the sound, whether they recall it as long and mournful, shrill and siren-like, or like a steamboat.

Anyone from another city might wonder why we have no fine old houses along our streets that grace so many sister cities and why there are no ancient buildings around town. The answer is that Crossett was a mill town, period. It had no other purpose but to give a place to live for the men who worked at the various industries or the commissary. There were no other industries and few other places of business anywhere around. Furthermore, no one could buy a house in Crossett. Every house and every place of business belonged to the company and the word of the company was law. For many years residents were carefully screened and those who did not fit well in the community were simply asked or told to leave. Houses were built to fit the family and as the family grew, another part would be added to the house, but it still belonged to the company.

Then in 1946 and 1947, after much discussion and deliberation, the Crossett Lumber Company decided that it was not in the housing business and should not be in any business but timber. They commissioned the Bartholomew Company to devise a comprehensive long-range plan for the city, including parks, church areas, school grounds, business districts, school locations, even a possible college site. All streets and avenues were carefully laid out, utilities designated, and residential areas blueprinted.[7]



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**Notes on Chapter N**

[1] Interview with Kenneth Crain, purchas
Pacific, 1981.

[2] *The News Observer*, June 11, 1973.

[3] *Ibid.*, April 26, 1978.

[4] Interview with Hazen Bryant, March 20,

[5] Interview with Bill Perdue, retired, assist

[6] Interview with Lonnie Gibbs, assistant plan
in 1962.

[7] City of Crossett Archives.

Then the Crossett Lumber Company began to sell houses to tenants at a very low cost. To the surprise of almost everyone, people bought madly and quickly and began to rebuild, add to and modify the old company-type houses. The company has grown remarkably since then and the residential areas have continued to expand. Population has about doubled since the mid-forties.

The business district has expanded over and over again and shopping centers have been added. Hundreds of beautiful new brick homes have been built, a city hall has been erected on Main Street, and service buildings are appropriately, designed and located. The city now owns itself and regulates the way it wishes to grow.

One day, grand old houses will grace our streets, along with beautiful public buildings of ancient vintage and many other monuments to this generation of builders who took pride in the growth of their little city. But three things will still be missing: the Rose Inn, the smokestack and the mill whistle.

## Notes on Chapter Nine

[1] Interview with Kenneth Crain, purchasing manager for Georgia Pacific, 1981.

[2] *The News Observer*, June 11, 1973.

[3] *Ibid.*, April 26, 1978.

[4] Interview with Hazen Bryant, March 20, 1981.

[5] Interview with Bill Perdue, retired, assistant plant manager.

[6] Interview with Lonnie Gibbs, assistant plant manager until retirement in 1962.

[7] City of Crossett Archives.